Trash Pit Skills Park Rebuild Project

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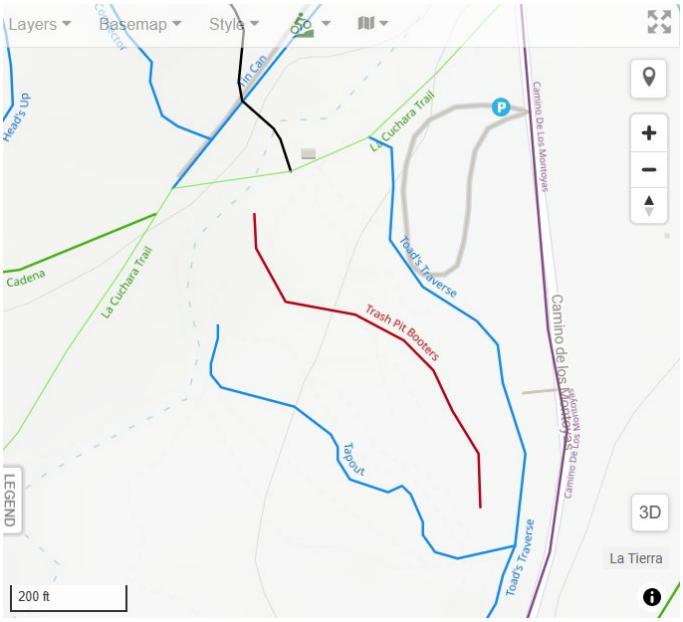
Introduction

The La Tierra Open Space is located a few miles north of the city of Santa Fe, NM and has been a staple location for mountain bike recreation for decades. In 2012, The City of Santa Fe Parks and Recreation Division formalized the open space, creating designated parking areas, signage, and watering systems for various areas. They also designated two separate areas for technical trails, The Trash Pit and the BMX Dirt Jumps, along with various other technical trails. The Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, I Ride NM, and The Santa Fe Conservation Trust all work in conjunction with the city to maintain the network of trails on a volunteer basis for the greater public to enjoy.

For gravity-based trails, local trail builders struggle to keep up on regular maintenance. Freeze-thaw cycles in the winter and major rainstorm events in the summer lead to significant trail and feature damage. Not only do these events erode valuable topsoil from the riding surface, but they also exhume buried river rock that can be dangerous to riders. These effects are accelerated by heavy use, which means that these trails need constant attention. Due to the sheer volume of infrastructure, many areas do not receive the maintenance they need. The intention of this project is to upgrade heavy-traffic zones by installing proper drainage, building metal and wood features, and doing soil stabilization to improve the user experience and ensure longevity. The selected trails will cater to all levels of riders and provide safe stepping-stones for riders to advance their skills on larger features.

The Trash Pit



The Trash Pit is located uphill and to the south of the Frijoles trailhead parking lot in the La Tierra open space. Originally a dumping ground for city refuse, including building materials and dirt, it made for a logical DIY mountain bike space in the early 2000s. The Trash Pit was formalized in the aforementioned 2012 La Tierra masterplan and has been a magnet for mountain bikers and BMX riders alike ever since.

The area comprises over 10 different lines that descend to the west/northwest, and converge into an uphill trail that loops back to the top in a clockwise fashion. There is also an old pump track at the northernmost end, before the start of the up trail. Only two of the ten lines at the trash pit are shown on Trailforks, the world's leading

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mountain bike trails app. In Figure 1., the most popular line at the Trash Pit, called Larry's Line, is shown as "Trash Pit Booters." Figure 2. shows all 10 lines at the Trash Pit, along with their names. These lines vary in difficulty and style of features and terrain.

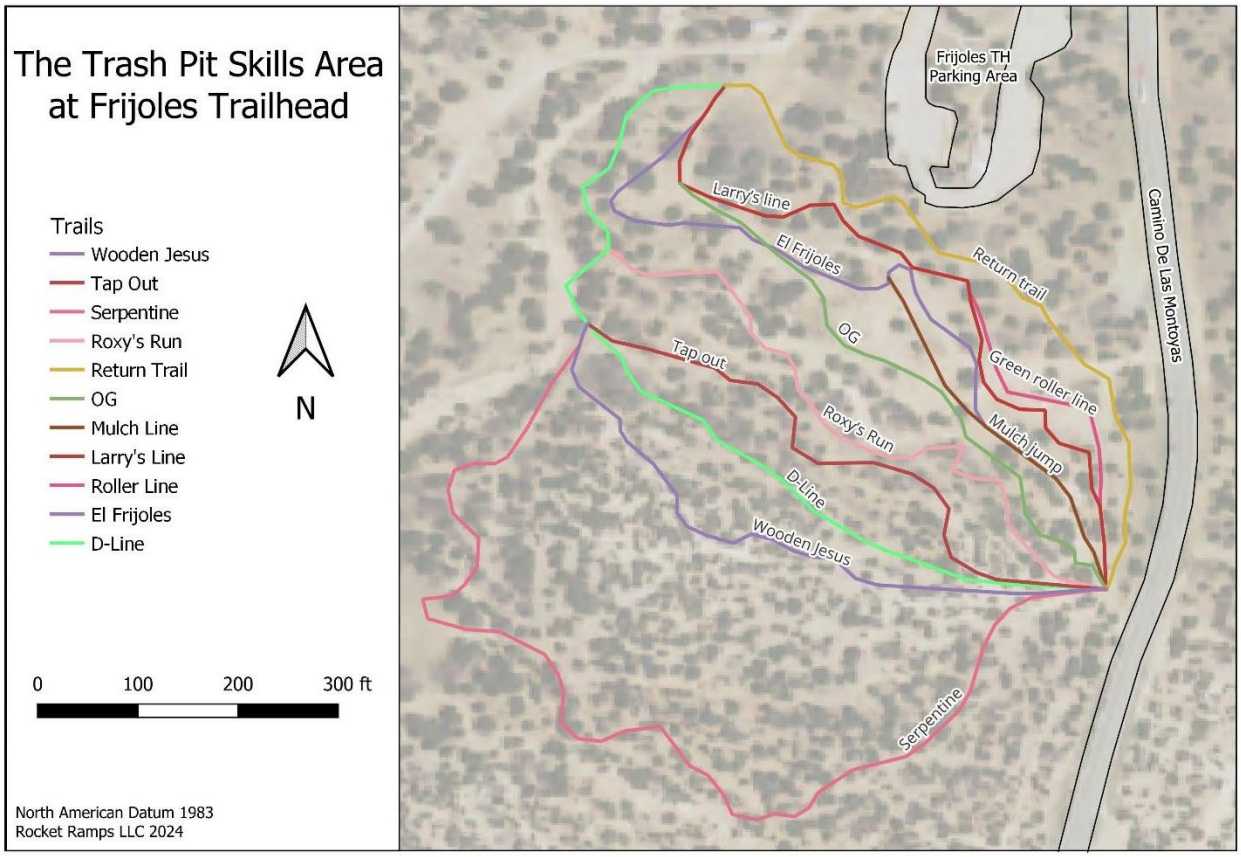

Figure 2. Existing Trails at the Trash Pit

Trash Pit Trail Descriptions

Serpentine (blue square rating)

Serpentine is named for its twisting nature and consists of numerous rollers and berms. The way the berms and rollers are arranged makes it a technical, more BMX-style trail, where riders roll and jump various features in an interpretive way. It is one of the longer trails at the Trash Pit and is the westernmost trail.

Wooden Jesus (double black rating)

Wooden Jesus is a north-shore style trail, consisting of a series of ladder drops, cannons, and on-off features with dirt landings. It culminates in an iconic canyon gap jump over a ravine before joining back into Serpentine and D-Line. The features are well over 15 years old and are in serious disrepair.

D-Line (blue square rating)

D-Line is a series of three bike-park style tabletops that descend straight down the hill. They are wide jumps with relatively mellow lips and landings which makes it an ideal location for riders to learn to ride jumps with speed. The line is dug straight into the ground and has significant drainage issues.

Tapout (blue/black rating)

Tapout is one of the first trails that was built at the Trash Pit and was originally built as a dual slalom track. The trail consists of tight berms and jumps that require the rider to ride aggressively and proactively to maintain speed.

Roxy's Run (green circle rating)

Roxy's Run is a green level berm trail that parallels Tapout and has no jump features. It is merely a flow line for beginner riders that allows them to practice cornering skills at varying speeds.

OG (blue square rating)

OG, along with Tapout, was one of the first few lines constructed at the Trash Pit. The line starts from the top of the up-trail, and splits into two lines a quarter of the way down (OG left, and OG right). These lines then converge lower down. This line was originally all double jumps but has since been turned into tabletops. It is one of the most popular lines at the Trash Pit, as it allows riders to practice riding steeper jumps without the consequence of a gap jump.

Mulch Line (black diamond rating)

The Mulch Line is a shorter trail that leads into a step-up jump with a wood takeoff and a landing covered in wood/garden mulch. This allows riders to try tricks with little consequence, as the mulch softens falls. Riders travel from around the state to ride this jump, as it is one-of-a-kind for progression.

El Frijoles (double black diamond rating)

El Frijoles is a pro-level dirt jump line that shares the in-run to the Mulch Line. It consists of steep double jumps with angled landings and takeoffs, and joins back into the OG line after a wooden double jump.

Larry's Line (green/blue rating)

Larry's line is another popular trail that consists of beginner-level tabletops and drops that weave their way to the bottom of the jump area. There is a split lower down to go into a drop zone built by SFFTS a number of years ago.

Up Trail (green circle rating)

The main return trail at the Trash Pit, called Toad's Traverse, is a bi-directional trail that brings riders to the top. It is the only bi-directional trail in the skills zone.

Pump Track

At the bottom of the Trash Pit, in a flat plain above an arroyo, there is an old pump track that doesn't see too much use. There is no specified direction.

Proposed Trash Pit Modifications

Each trail and skills area within the Trash Pit requires regular maintenance, especially in the spring after the winter freeze-thaw cycles. Fixing drainage issues and replacing dirt features with metal and wood ones will dramatically minimize that required maintenance and increase the longevity of these trails. This will also create a more consistent experience for users, making the Trash Pit safer for riders to expand and enhance their skills—a critical component of a strong mountain bike community. This proposal lays out a few key rebuilds to start making this great park even better.

The project set forth is to rebuild the Wooden Jesus line, rebuild the OG line, enhance and improve the Mulch Line, and rebuild Larry's Line. The final stage will be emplacing trail signs with a kiosk at the base showing the different trails.

Wooden Jesus

Wooden Jesus is a line that embodies the roots of freeride mountain biking. North Shore-style features lend excitement and a change-up to traditional gravity-oriented trails, and are easier (and less expensive) to maintain than an all-dirt trail. Wooden Jesus is currently a double black trail with mandatory gaps, and some features require the rider to manage their speed, as opposed to the whole trail being rideable at "trail speed." We propose rebuilding the features using rot-resistant cedar, modifying the take-offs to be more consistent, and creating wider and taller landings with case-pads. We also want to move and modify features so the trail can be ridden at trail speed. There will be five different wooden structures, ranging from drops to cannon logs. The cost of this trail rebuild is $29,300.

OG Line

OG is a popular line for intermediate to advanced riders looking to expand their jumping skillset. Due to the number of features and their respective sizes, maintaining this line is always a challenge. We propose refining the in-run trail to these jumps for better sightlines and a more consistent speed profile. We will adjust the grade of the entire line to be between 5 and 7%. Next, we propose replacing all six dirt take-offs with metal framed ramps with wood decking. These ramps, similar to the rebuild on Red Dawg at La Tierra, will be buried in the ground with a tabletop jump profile. The line will be designed to be a steppingstone to the Mulch Line and El Frijoles, creating continuity of growth. We will also re-grade the hillside the jumps are dug into to prevent seasonal wash out from rainstorms. We will emplace culverts in jump depressions, and armor inlets and outlets with rock. Steep mounds of dirt that currently fall down and erode will be graded to 2:1 H:V to ensure long term stability and vegetation regrowth. The cost of this rebuild is $75,282.

Mulch Line

The Mulch Line at the Trash Pit is one of the biggest draws to the Trash Pit for advanced to professional riders. The takeoff to the jump is wooden and is approximately 9 ft. tall. The current ramp is rotting and falling apart, as it is staked into the dirt. The landing is roughly 12 ft tall above grade and the dirt surface is covered with roughly 1 ft of wood chips from the transfer station. We propose replacing the takeoff jump with a metal framed ramp with wooden decking, re-grading the pit where the ramp sits to prevent dirt falling in, emplacing a culvert from the takeoff pit that directs water to the west, regrading the landing, and emplacing softer landscaping mulch. These modifications will prevent erosion, create a predictable takeoff and landing, and make progression of tricks significantly safer. The cost of this rebuild is $25,559.

Larry's Line

Larry's line is a popular line for beginners looking to improve their jumping skills. The current line is plagued with line-of-sight issues, shallow berms, and tight jumps. We propose opening up the sightlines, opening turn radii, and replacing the four dirt takeoffs with metal/wood takeoffs. These jumps will be very mellow and will be fully buried so riders can roll over the jump without catching air. The jumps will be designed to increase gradually in size to provide a stepping stone to the OG line. Similarly to OG, we will emplace culverts and create sustainable drainage on the line. The cost for this rebuild is $42,016.

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Trash Pit Signage

A lacking component of the Trash Pit skills area is adequate signage. People are always asking where certain trails are, and often individuals go down lines that are too difficult. We aim to solve this by creating a unified signage system that states the trail's name and ability level. These lines will be summarized in a kiosk at the entrance to the park that has a trail map. There will also be a set of park rules, along with mentions of the SFFTS, IRideNM, SFCT, and the City of Santa Fe. The signs will utilize a more standard system of denoting terrain features seen at bike parks and ski resort terrain parks. Figures 3 and 4 show examples of these types of signs. The price for signs, posts, and kiosks will be $35,190

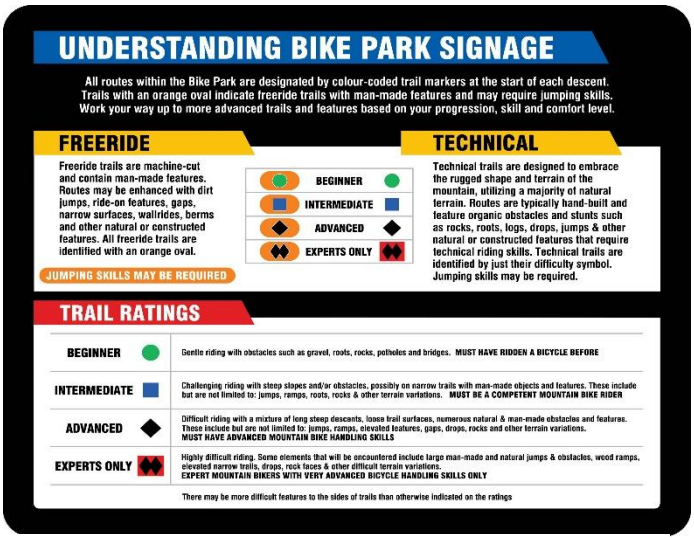

Figure 3. Bike park signage and difficulty ratings

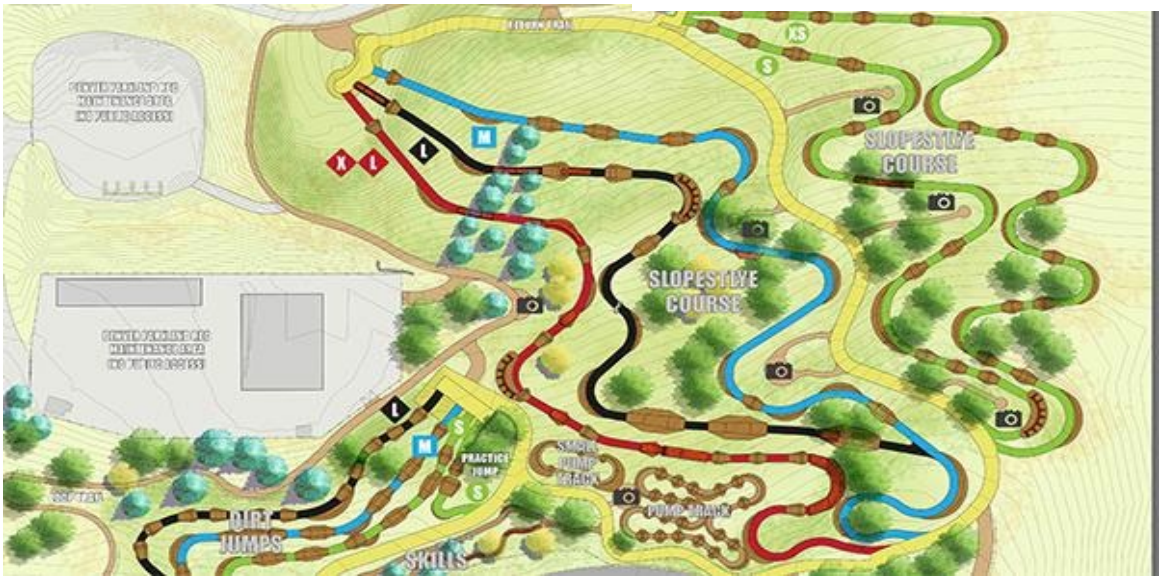

Figure 4. A simplified bike park map for the kiosk at the trailhead

Construction Timeline

Rocket Ramps envisions this project taking place in the winter of 2024/2025. The lack of consistent snow cover in La Tierra over the winter will allow Rocket Ramps to get the majority of the dirt work done before the spring. As winter subsides, we plan on watering and packing the trails in for a season of use. Because we will be mitigating erosion issues and packing the trails in well, they will need minimal maintenance for years to come.

During the fall/winter of 2024/2025, Rocket Ramps plans on coordinating the fabrication of metal/wood features with our metal fabricator, Bogue Designs LLC. These features will be constructed and staged at Rocket Ramp's shop until they are emplaced during the end of winter/spring of 2025. The total duration of this project is estimated to be roughly 13 weeks, or roughly 3 months, with a total cost of $207,347.